

# **How to Succeed With Volunteers-In-Parks**

60-Minute Module Series

## **DESIGNING JOBS**

### **Training Guide**

#### **HANDOUTS**

**National Park Service  
Volunteers-In-Parks Program**



## **Guide to Handouts**

- H-1:** Key Concepts of Designing Jobs for Volunteers
- H-2:** Why Written VIP Job Descriptions Are Mandatory
- H-3:** Trends in Volunteering
- H-4:** Characteristics of Good Volunteer Jobs
- H-5:** Essential Elements of Written Job Descriptions
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- H-7:** Sample Volunteer Job Description

# Key Concepts of Designing Jobs for Volunteers

**The purpose of a written job description is to officially document priority work that the park has determined needs to be done, and the volunteer agrees to do.**

## **Concept 1**

**Written job descriptions are critical to the ultimate success of a volunteer program.**

Written job descriptions are powerful management tools that describe priority work within the context of total staffing needs. They provide a clear understanding of what is expected of the volunteer and serve a direct role in recruiting, selecting, placing, supporting, and evaluating the volunteer. Written job descriptions can also help minimize potential liability problems.

## **Concept 2**

**Understanding trends in volunteering will have an impact on job design and re-design in your park.**

The pool of potential volunteers, as well as their needs, expectations and time availability, are important factors to consider when designing volunteer jobs.

## **Concept 3**

**Good volunteer job design can help attract and hold the best volunteers available.**

Volunteer jobs can be tailored to make sure volunteers get an experience that is meaningful and measurable, and at the same time offers variety, growth, and a sense of completion. These jobs should also appeal to the individual motivational types of volunteers. And along the way, there should always be elements of fun.

## **Concept 4**

**Job descriptions should be clearly written, and include all essential information.**

In addition to the job title and the work to be done, job descriptions should include the volunteer's supervisor, time commitment, skills needed, goal of the job, training to be given, work location, benefits to the volunteer, and any special requirements of the job.

# **Why Written VIP Job Descriptions Are Mandatory**

## **Staffing.**

Job descriptions are the end result of the needs assessment planning process. The process works to make the most effective use of staff.

## **Setting Priorities.**

Written job descriptions clearly spell out the priority work that is most appropriate for volunteers to do.

## **Recruiting.**

Job descriptions help in recruiting. Volunteer centers, for example, will only list jobs which have written descriptions.

## **Selecting.**

With a written job description on hand, it is easier to say “yes” or “no” to a prospective volunteer.

## **Placement.**

Job descriptions allow a better match between prospective volunteers and jobs.

## **Mutual Understanding.**

Written job descriptions spell out the work the volunteer has agreed to do.

## **Commitment.**

Written job descriptions demonstrate your serious commitment to volunteers and to volunteer positions.

## **Support and Feedback.**

Job descriptions are the basic documents upon which supervision and evaluation are based.

## **Continuity.**

Written job descriptions provide continuity from one volunteer to the next in the same position.

## **Liability Protection.**

Written job descriptions detail the work that the volunteer has agreed to do. Such documentation can be critical in cases where on-the-job injury or tort claims must be settled.

## **Trends In Volunteering**

1. Volunteers have increasing demands on their time.
2. Volunteers are looking for more short-term volunteer opportunities.
3. Volunteers (especially “Babyboomers”) want challenging and interesting assignments.
4. Volunteers are coming from a broader cross-section of society (i.e., growing numbers of professionals, unemployed youth, diverse ethnic groups).
5. Today’s volunteers expect to be treated professionally.
6. Most volunteers are employed.
7. Seniors over 70 are increasing in numbers and are volunteering in increasing percentages.
8. Nearly all volunteers need more flexibility, finding it difficult to commit to regular hours.
9. Family and group volunteering is gaining in popularity.
10. People are interested in working for causes, not just for organizations.
11. Many volunteer to get job experience or training, or as a re-entry experience.
12. Many prospective volunteers already have professional skills.

# **Characteristics of Good Volunteer Jobs**

**Meaningful and Significant**

**Ownership and Responsibility**

**Variety/Continuity/Growth**

**Academic/Work Credit**

**Measurable Goals and Objectives**

**Fun Stuff**

**Tailored to “motivational type” of Volunteer:**

## **Appeals to Need to Achieve:**

- Latitude in setting pace and methods
- Challenges skills and abilities
- Progress evident, feedback clear
- Goals within reach, opportunity to master

## **Appeals to Need for Power:**

- Sense of importance, real purpose
- Prestige, recognition
- Opportunity to direct co-workers
- Opportunity to control work
- Access to decision making

## **Appeals to Need to Affiliate:**

- Being part of the team
- Opportunities to interact
- Cooperation required
- Stable work group

# **Essential Elements of Written Job Descriptions**

**Job Title**

**Supervisor**

**Work Location**

**Time Commitment**

**Major Duties**

**Benefits to Volunteer**

**Goal/Outcome of Job**

**Qualifications (Knowledge, Skills, Experience)**

**Training and/or Preparation Required**

**Special Requirements**

# **Volunteer Job Description**

## **National Park Service**

**Job Title:**

**Name of VIP:**

**Supervisor:**

**Location:**

**Project Duration:**

**Hours Per Week:**

**Hours Per Month:**

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**Description of Duties:**

**Benefits to VIP:**

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**Goal/Outcome of Job:**

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**Knowledge/Skills/Experience Desired:**

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**Special Requirements:**



# Volunteer Job Description

## Jellystone National Park

**Job Title:** Visitor Center Volunteer

**Name of VIP:** Yogi Bear

**Supervisor:** Ranger Smith

**Location:** Picnic Basket Visitor Center, Jellystone National Park

**Project Duration:** Ongoing      **Hours Per Week:** 4      **Hours Per Month:** 20

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**Description of Duties:** Volunteer is responsible for operating a visitor center. Operation tasks include greeting park visitors and providing information on cultural, historical, and natural points of interest in the area and throughout the park. Some knowledge of local area will be necessary to answer visitor questions, including how to access attractions from the visitor center. Volunteer will also be responsible for accepting program reservations over the phone and answering phone inquiries. The volunteer operates a cash register and sells park cooperating association retail materials. Volunteer may also issue Golden Age and Golden Access Passports.

### **Benefits to VIP:**

- Personal enrichment and experience working in a national park setting
  - Retail job training and experience
  - Experience in communicating with people of diverse cultures
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### **Goal/Outcome of job:**

- Provide efficient, courteous services, and helpful information to park visitors
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### **Knowledge/Skills/Experience Desired:**

- Excellent oral communication skills
  - Knowledge of local area and resources helpful
  - Retail sales experience helpful
  - Computer keyboard experience helpful
  - Bi-lingual language skills helpful
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### **Special Requirements:**

Volunteer will need to spend a major portion of work time standing; volunteer may be asked to drive a government-owned vehicle to pick up supplies within the park.